

ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to a milk-coagulating enzyme of bacterial origin and a process for producing cheese by using this enzyme, namely, an enzyme that is produced by a bacterium belonging to the genus *Paenibacillus* and exhibits milk-coagulating activity, characterized by having the following enzymological properties: 1) function: having an activity of coagulating milk to form a curd; 2) substrate specificity: acting on κ -casein as a substrate and specifically cleaving Thr94-Met95 in the presence of calcium; 3) optimum pH: 6.0-7.0, and 4) molecular weight: 35,000-37,000 Da when measured by SDS-PAGE; a process for producing the enzyme; a process for producing cheese; and a cheese-like food product.